



Germany: Facts & Figures March 2006

A monthly overview of current opinion data and statistical information in the Federal Republic of Germany

Federal Politics

If Bundestag elections were held on April 2, the CDU/CSU would receive 38% of the vote, the SPD 28%, the Green Party 9%, the FDP 7%, the PDS (with WASG) 8%, and all other parties combined 4%. (forsa. 03/29/06)

State Parliament Elections and Municipal Elections

In Rhineland-Palatinate the SPD achieved an absolute majority in the state parliament elections. The SPD gained 45.6% (up 0.9% compared to the figures from 2001) of the votes, the CDU 32.8% (-3.3%, the worst result in the CDU history in Rhineland-Palatinate), the FDP 8.0% (-0.2%), while the Green Party failed to pass the 5% mark. The voter turnout reached an all-time low with 60% (down 2%). (Major papers, 03/27/06)

In Baden-Württemberg, the CDU achieved 44.2% (-0.6%), the SPD 25.2% (-8.1%), the FDP 10.7% (+p 2.5%) and the Green Party 11.7% (+4%). In Baden-Württemberg, the voter turnout was 53.4% (-9%). (Major papers, 03/27/06)

In Saxony-Anhalt, the CDU won 36.2% (-1.1% compared to the results from 2002), the SPD 21.4% (+1.4%), the Left Party 24.1% (+3.7%), the FDP 6.7% (-6.6%) and the Green Party 3.6% (+1.6%). The extremist right-wing DVU failed to gain enough votes to enter parliament. The voter turnout in the country was 43%, a low in post-war German history. (Major papers, 03/27/06)

For the first time in 25 years, the CDU is the strongest force at the local level in Hesse. In municipal elections, the CDU achieved 38.8% of the votes (38.1% in 2001), the SPD 34.5% (-4%), the Green Party 9.5% (+0.4%) and the FDP 5.6% (+0.4%). (Major papers, 03/28/06)

Economy

The unemployment rate decreased to 12.0% in March (12.2% in February). 4.976 million people are unemployed, 72.000 less than in February 2006, and 290.000 less than in March 2005. However, a stronger decrease in the number of unemployed had been expected. (Agentur fuer Arbeit. 03/30/06)

The ifo-business sentiment index reached its highest level since October 1991, even though analysts had predicted a decline for March. Rises took place across the board, indicating that the economic recovery has stabilized further. (ifo. Major papers, 03/29/06)

2005 was a good year for US companies in Germany: 58% increased revenues, and 76% expect further growth in 2006. 36% of investors indicated that their view of Germany as a place to do business had improved over the last twelve months. With EUR 120 billion in investments and 850,000 direct jobs, Germany is a magnet for US investment in Europe. 31% of companies have hiring plans, 28% intend to continue cutting employee numbers in 2006. 44% of US investors plan to expand their German sales units, and 29% want to strengthen their marketing. This contrasts with cuts in administration (-38%) and production (-24%). (American Chamber of Commerce Press Release, 03/16/06)

The city of Dresden will be the first large German city without debt after the city council accepted the sale of its public housing corporation to the U.S. Fortress pension fund. With a net income of 980 million euros, Dresden will be able to repay its debt overnight. (Major papers, 03/10/06)

Society

The number of foreigners living in Germany remained constant in 2005 at 6.76 million foreigners, about 8% of the population. 32% are from member states of the European Union, 48% from other European countries (26% from Turkey, 8% from Italy, 5% from Poland or Greece). 12% came from Asia, 4% from Africa and 3% from North- and South America. 66% of these foreigners have lived in Germany long enough to be able to apply for naturalization. (Federal Statistical Office. 03/28/06)

Young Germans are much more interested in political questions than their counterparts in other EU countries. 51% of young Germans between ages 15 and 21 said they are interested in political questions, while 36% of French youth and only 33% of young people in Britain, Estonia and the Slovak Republic expressed such an interest. (Die Welt, 03/21/06)

The birth rate in Germany last year dropped to the lowest level since 1991. 676,000 babies were born, a decline of 4.2% compared to the figures from 2004. Germany has the lowest birth figure with 8.5 births per 1,000 inhabitants in Europe. Structurally weak regions in eastern Germany, the Saarland and North Rhine-Westphalia are likely to lose up to 15% of their population, while boom regions like Munich, Hamburg, and Berlin will face an increase in their population of up to 15%. (Federal Statistical Office. Major papers, 03/14/06 and 03/15/06)